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The Classification of Slight Varieties.

The question of how to deal with minor variations in plants, opened for discussion in the October BULLETIN, is an important one. People sometimes ask what is to become of systematic botany when all the species are named. I always reply that we shall then have to find out what a species is; and this much learned, it will not be strange if future generations will have the pleasure of reconstructing our whole nomenclature. The making of species and varieties is not an end in botany; it is only a means of presenting facts, statistics, upon which the genuine science of systematic botany, when it comes, must be built. Variations are more important than names or systems of naming, and the botanist who regards them as unworthy of recognition does not possess the spirit of modern inquiry. It is just this sort of inquiry which is bound to attract a coming generation of botanists to the study of cultivated plants.

But in the meantime, the slight variations must be named, or at least recorded. Mr. Cockerell's suggestion that in the future such variations be designated by fixed adjectives, is a good one, yet, in practice, it would meet difficulties. "Albiflorus" is generic for white varieties; but these varieties often vary in themselves, White in our loose vernacular is often pink-white, or yellowish-white, or light blue. And whiteness of flower is often correlated with whiteness or other characteristic of stem. If we are to look for causes in these variations, then our nomenclature might rest upon causes rather than parts. It is well known that characters of soil, exposure and culture often induce definite variations. It seems to me that each variation must receive a name fitting to itself, and this name should follow the laws of our botanic nomenclature.

There appears to be no objection to the use of *form* as compared with *variety*. This same difficulty, in regard to cultivated plants, has often troubled me, and I once advised that *forma* be employed to designate slight cultural varieties,* but later it occurred to me that the term had better be left to botany and that *hortensis* (abbreviated to *hort.*) should be used.†

It cannot be expected that all the "forms" of plants could be

*Nomenclature of Garden Plants, Country Gent., 1885, 536.

†Agricultural Sci. i. 52.

included in our manuals, nor would it be advisable to insert them there. But record should be made of them, and the time will come when they will be collated. The possibilities of such study are great.

L. H. BAILEY.

Notes from New Hampshire.

A few notes from the Franconia Mountains may prove of interest. I found on the west side, between here and Lisbon, quite a quantity of *Nardosmia palmata*, of course long out of bloom but recognizable by its large leaf, so beautifully white-felted on the under side. On this road, too, there is any quantity of *Onoclea Struthiopteris*, which I collected for the first time in my life. It grows in Rhode Island, but I never knew it to fruit there. Here it is in splendid condition. The prevailing golden-rods are forms of *S. juncea* and *arguta*, and they vary infinitely. I find also *squarrosa*, *thyrsoides*, *latifolia*, *bicolor*, *altissima*, *nemoralis*, *Canadensis*, *lanceolata*. I have not the "Synoptical" with me, and so use old terms. Of asters I notice *A. puniceus* as the most common. I find besides *A. cordifolius*, *macrophyllus*, *acuminatus*, *miser* (?). *Rubus odoratus* is abundant and beautiful. *Impatiens biflora* is so common as to give a distinct character to the roadside. It blooms most profusely. A showy feature of the scene is caused by the red berries of *Viburnum Opulus*, here called "high cranberry." I have seen no oaks, chestnuts nor hickories. The mountain ash is frequent.

I have found some interesting specimens of *Osmunda Claytoniana*. Some of the fronds bear fruit in the usual manner. Others, from the same root-stock, produce pinnæ, on the backs of which the naked sporangia are disposed at the ends of the veinlet, and near the edges of the pinnules, much as in *Polypodium*. Some pinnules show an earlier stage of modification, a development of thickened papillæ or hairs, non-differentiated into sporangia.

On August 7th I ascended Mt. LaFayette and collected the following alpine; *Solidago Virga-aurea* var. *alpina*, *Arenaria Groenlandica*, (of course), *Geum radiatum*, var. *Peckii*, nearly out of flower, *Prenanthes Boottii* and *nana*, *Funcus trifidus*, *Agrostis canina*, var. *alpina*, *Carex rigida*, and some mosses. I